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SOCIETY FOR THE ENTERTAINMENT OF
SHUT-INS

Founded by Rev. George W. Shinn, D.D.

Boston, 1908

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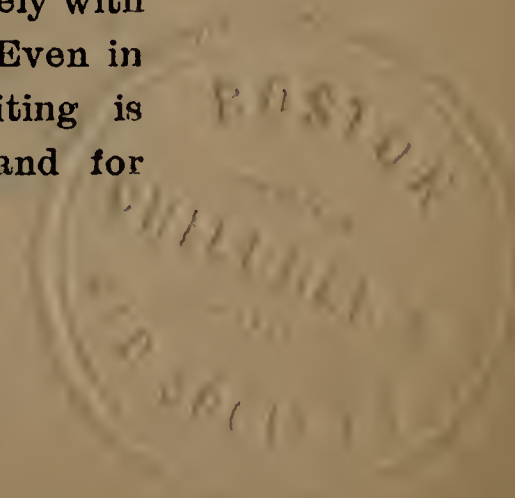
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Society for the Entertainment of Shut-Ins

Founded by Rev. George W. Shinn, D. D.

IN again asking for the means to carry on our work, we feel confident that the record of the past is the best guaranty that can be given of its need and value. While much that is done cannot be told in detail because of its personal character, a brief summary of what has been accomplished since organization may be illuminating.

Early in 1901 the Society for the Entertainment of Origin Shut-Ins was called into being by Rev. George W. Shinn, and D. D., so long an active worker for good in Greater Pur-Boston. Its aim was to relieve the monotony and pain pose of a shut-in life, and from the first it found a wide field for its labors. Its original plan included giving entertainments in hospitals and other institutions, but although that is still done to some extent, the present work is chiefly among isolated invalids, and almost entirely with chronic sufferers, "whom the Lord has shut in." Even in institutions it has been found that friendly visiting is more acceptable than regular entertainments, and for



the lonely Shut-Ins the regular visits are indeed a blessing. One invalid marked on a calendar the days when the visitor was to come, saying—"Those are the bright days for us."

Special mention might be made of several public institutions where visitors are few and where our representatives are eagerly welcomed and clung to at parting with entreaties to come again soon. To one of these our Society is the only one that sends any Christmas remembrances.

Our For several years all the visiting was done by vol-
Visi- unteers, but this was found impracticable, as they often
tors failed where the need was the greatest.

Although we cannot speak too highly of those who have been faithful in whatever they have undertaken, we find that very few volunteers can be depended upon to make regular visits, or to report either those made or failure to make them. At present we have those especially fitted for the work, who are unable to give their services entirely, but for a very moderate sum visit one or more days a week. Their enthusiasm and the reports given by them and by those they visit prove both their fitness and the wisdom of the plan. Not everyone has the necessary qualifications for a work that calls for tact and sympathy in an unusual degree. One visitor after taking the Christmas gifts to those on her list said: "I dreaded this

holiday season because I knew it would be so unlike those of other years. And so it was, but it was the most blessed and happiest Christmas season I ever spent. The welcome of faces marked with pain, the blessings of the helpless, made me feel as if I were really doing the Lord's work."

Another said :—"I only wish I could afford to do this without pay other than the good it does me, but I cannot now. It will help me all my life to think of the courage and patience and faith of the Shut-Ins I have visited."

A sufferer about to undergo an operation said: "If I could only have Mrs. M—— (our visitor) with me, I think I could stand it." Another said: "She is just like an angel, so she is, she brings such comfort with her."

No small part of the Society's work is the distribution of articles sent in; Christmas gifts, materials for fancy work, reading matter, stationery, etc. To a long list remembrances are sent at Christmas and Easter, on birthdays and special occasions. Correspondents are provided when desired, and in many cases magazines, post cards, etc., are sent regularly. Quantities of reading matter are sent to institutions as well as to individuals.

Last summer an appeal was made for a special fund and in this way some of the Shut-Ins received their first outing for years. A special fund for sick-room comforts also has been the source of great benefit to many who are

unable to afford such luxuries, although not otherwise in need of charity. Under this head we may mention new glasses for one who earns her own living, although unable
How to take a step or lift her hands to her head ; a chair made
We comfortable for one who must live in it, and a lifter which
Have takes the place of an extra attendant in moving a helpless
Helped sufferer.

An elderly woman, suddenly stricken blind, was saved from complete breakdown by frequent visits which kept her from losing courage during the first weeks of darkness.

A poor, old lady, well past three score and ten was found to be a native of a neighboring State. The visitor called the attention of the "Daughters" from that State to her and she is now their ward, and sheds happy tears as she tells how much brightness has come into her life through our Society.

Another woman with Pilgrim and Revolutionary ancestors was found sick, desolate and destitute. Through our visitor a patriotic organization was interested, raised a fund and placed her in a Home where her few remaining years may be passed in comfort.

A man in middle life with a dependent family was ill and despairing. A wheel chair was provided and he is now able to go out and by the sale of small articles adds

considerable to the family revenues and still more to his stock of courage and hope.

A hard working man who has lost his leg, is grateful beyond measure for the wheel chair and other help given.

The list might be indefinitely extended, to tell of the brightness brought into darkened lives. For some of the aged ones, old friends have been looked up, pictures of once familiar scenes, books once especially dear, little comforts long desired, etc., have been procured. That there is no lack of appreciation the following extracts from letters will show :

“I was so lonely and miserable and felt as if I hadn’t a friend in the world when your Christmas gift came. You can’t know how much good it did me.”

From
the
Secre-
tary’s
Mail

“I had been suffering more than usual and felt so discouraged, when that lovely box of paper came with the beautiful Easter card. I had been crying before and then I cried for very gladness. It seemed just a message to me and after this I’ll try to remember that I’m not forgotten.”

“You have made the winter I dreaded pass much more happily.”

“I can’t say thank you hard enough. I’m so pleased with the box you sent.”

"Until the Shut-In Society came to me I used to think I was in a corner where God had forgot me, but I see He hadn't after all."

"I wish I could thank every one who has made the Society what it is. I do not believe they realize how much good it does."

"I've had so many blessings from the Society I want to do something, too. I have some little gifts which I wish you would give to someone else."

"I'm sure no one else can have so many good friends."

"I was so happy and excited over the wonder bag you sent that I couldn't sleep. It means something to look forward to."

For all this work, the present income is quite insufficient, and yet it is difficult to see where it should be curtailed. When visits have been made less frequent there come most piteous appeals hard to deny.

Do you not wish to do something to help in this work? A dollar a year constitutes one a contributing member. A few hundred dollars a year will suffice to carry cheer to many and a larger amount would enable us to do proportionately greater good. The secretary will gladly give further information.

1. Money to pay the visitors and general expenses of the Society. What We

2. A fund to provide delicacies and conveniences for the sick. Need

3. Volunteers for visitors and correspondents to send letters, reading matter or post cards regularly.

4. Wonder bags. These should contain a number of small gifts, wrapped separately, each with a long string attached coming out of the mouth of the bag, drawings to be made daily, tri- or semi- weekly, for a number of weeks. Articles suitable for invalids—stationery, postage, toilet articles, books or booklets, neckwear, handkerchiefs, bed or house shoes, notions, sewing or fancy work tools or materials, etc., etc. The filling of one or more of these may be done by circles of King's Daughters, church societies, clubs, etc.

5. Articles for distribution, especially Christmas and Easter gifts, new or old (in good condition).

6. Books either helpful or diverting, for gifts or for the circulating library.

PRESIDENT, REV. JOHN MCGAW FOSTER,

SECRETARY, MRS. F. B. TRACY,

16 Mystic Ave., Winchester, Tel. 449-5,

TREASURER, MR. F. F. MCLEOD,

National Shawmut Bank, 40 Water St., Boston.

The In January, 1907, this Society became affiliated with
Shut- the Shut-In Society, and a number of invalids were
In made members of the larger organization, whose scope
Society is world-wide but whose mission of cheer is largely
 carried on by correspondence, and which as a society does
 not give any material assistance. From the first the two
 have worked in harmony although not officially connected.

